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C O N F I D E N T I A L THE HAGUE 001359

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TAGS: PREL BR VE NT NL

SUBJECT: NETHERLANDS/VENEZUELA/BRAZIL: FM TO TRAVEL JULY  
10-11; NO MEETING WITH CHAVEZ

Classified By: Political Counselor Andrew Schofer; reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: Dutch FM Bot will likely travel to Brazil and Venezuela July 10 and 11, to meet with the Foreign Ministers of those two countries. As late as last month, the Dutch had hoped the meetings would be with Presidents Lula da Silva and Chavez. Chavez has refused for over a year to meet with Bot, and the Dutch have decided not to pursue the matter further. The MFA would welcome our thoughts prior to the visit. End summary.

¶2. (C) Venezuela desk officer Dimitri Vogelaar informed poloff June 16 that Bot's trip to Caracas is set for July 11 and is "pretty firm." Bot will travel first to Brazil and will stay overnight, if logistically possible, only in Curacao. Bot will meet with his Venezuelan and Brazilian counterparts and not with heads of state.

¶3. (C) Just last month, the MFA told us they expected Bot to meet with both Chavez and Lula da Silva. Vogelaar, without admitting defeat, has said that the MFA decided that FM-level meetings were more "appropriate." He said talks with Brazil would focus heavily on trade, while those with Venezuela would focus on Netherlands Antilles status negotiations, oil and energy, and human rights.

¶4. (C) Vogelaar said the MFA would appreciate any information we wished to share with them prior to the visit.

BLAKEMAN